

Communities In Schools National Office Storytelling Guidelines

This document outlines Communities In Schools® (CIS™) National Office guidelines and best practices for the collection, development, and dissemination of stories for internal and external purposes. You can find our Story Submission form online at <https://communitiesinschools.org/cisstory> or scan this QR code to **submit your CIS story!**



General Guidelines: CIS National, Affiliates, and Licensed Partners

- **We always** present stories that focus on student success. Stories should be student-centric, respectful, uplifting, and hopeful, in order to inspire action and deepen engagement. Give students/alumni the option to tell their own story, in their own words.
- **We do NOT** present stories that are judging, blaming, exploitative, inauthentic, hopeless, pessimistic, or without solutions. Never present a story without a purpose.
- All stories about current and former students and site/reengagement coordinators are written to highlight the work CIS does every day to eliminate barriers that stand between them and their success in school and life.
- CIS National works in partnership with local affiliates and licensed partners across the network to collect and tell the stories of students, alumni, site/reengagement coordinators, and other constituents impacted by our work.
- CIS National solicits student/alumni and site/reengagement coordinator stories through several vehicles, primarily through targeted email solicitations, social media, targeted outreach through Brand Ambassadors, and the national monthly Community Briefing.
- CIS National utilizes student/alumni and site/reengagement coordinator stories to support various communications and development needs, including but not limited to: earned media stories, social media, national website, proposals, funder/donor reports, direct mail fundraising letters, fundraising emails, national publications, and other print collateral, including brochures, impact reports, annual reports, engagement campaigns, newsletters, etc.
- CIS National communicates with affiliates/licensed partners about the purpose for developing the story and how it will be used.

Story Development



- CIS National works closely with local affiliates and licensed partners on the development of student/alumni and site/reengagement coordinator stories. The production process goes as follows:
 1. CIS National coordinates with site/reengagement coordinator to identify, vet, and arrange an interview with the student. Affiliate/Licensed Partner obtains necessary permission forms from the student's parents or guardians to participate in sharing their story.
 2. Students and site/reengagement coordinators are interviewed to gather details/content. CIS National works directly with alumni to create alumni stories, informing the related affiliate/licensed partner and affiliate/licensed partner contacts whenever possible.
 3. CIS National drafts story and shares with affiliate/licensed partner, student/alumni, and/or site/reengagement coordinator for review/approval.

4. CIS National requests/collects photo/video releases from the affiliate/licensed partner and/or photographer and gains approval of copy before it's published.
 5. CIS National publishes, promotes, and shares the final story with affiliate/licensed partner (and student/alumni) for use.
- CIS National saves and stores all photos/videos and photo releases from affiliates/licensed partners in the national photo database, along with the written permission of the student/alumni for use of the story.
 - CIS National will only use the stories and assets during a 2-year period from the publication date.
 - Affiliates/Licensed Partners are notified about the media opportunities by phone and/or email outlining specific details about the interview, media outlet, reporter, deadline, and story angle. Affiliates/Licensed Partners are responsible for gaining appropriate permissions from the student's parents or guardians in advance of media interview.

Content Guidelines: For Students and Alumni



- We identify students only by first name or, if necessary, a pseudonym at the request of the student (should be disclosed).
 - We profile students who identify as a CIS student, both for current students, beginning in elementary school as well as former students (alumni). A CIS student is defined as a current student enrolled in a CIS affiliate/licensed partner program or a former student who identifies as a CIS alumni.
 - We are respectful of sensitive personal information and work with the students and alumni to present their stories in a way that is empowering.
 - We include, if possible, high-quality photos to accompany all stories.
 - **We do NOT** use stock photography or misleading imagery.
 - **We do NOT** delve into issues that could compromise the privacy or current and future reputation of the student and his/her family (no specific disclosure of sexual abuse, physical abuse, criminal activity, etc.), unless given permission by the student.
- **We always** include details about a specific intervention from a CIS site/reengagement coordinator.
 - **We always** include a positive outcome(s) noting that student is on a potential path to success.

Content Guidelines: For Site/Reengagement Coordinators

- We do identify site/reengagement coordinators by first and last name with the name of their affiliate/licensed partner location.
- **We do NOT** publish any details that site/reengagement coordinators may share as background information that could reveal personal details and identities for students that could potentially be damaging or life threatening if their identities or personal details were revealed.
- We include, if possible, high-quality photos to accompany all stories.
- **We do NOT** use stock photography or misleading imagery.
- **We always** include details about a specific intervention from a CIS site/reengagement coordinators.
- **We always** include a positive outcome(s) noting that student is on potential path to success.

